



Protect Our Wells

<http://protectourwells.org>

Important Dates:

- POW Board of Directors Meeting—1st Monday each month, Woodmen Valley Chapel Community Center
- El Paso County Water Authority—1st Wednesday each month, County Office Building

Interesting Websites:

- <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/gwlevels>
- <http://water.usgs.gov/ogw/techniques.html>
- <http://waterteconline.com>
- <http://groundwater.org>

President's Message

If you attended the August meeting, you received copies of the Executive Summary of the El Paso County Water Authority's (EPCWA) Water Report with an emphasis placed on the "Plan for Private Well Owners" section.

The purpose of the report is to assist the EPCWA members with evaluating how water demands can be met to the year 2020.

Monday's program features Gary Barber, consultant to EPCWA. Although Gary was not involved in the drafting of the Water Report, he will present what the Water Authority is doing, what it is trying to do for the Upper Black Squirrel Basin, and what is happening with the HB 1177 Roundtable process.

I want to **welcome new members to the Issues Research Committee:**

- Jaralyn Beek - Falcon
- Jim & Lynn Martin - Ellicott
- Jan Larson - Black Forest

They, along with chairperson, Bea Crandall, will be monitoring various websites for groundwater information to help POW Identify issues that we need to target.

Please see the new column: "ASK POW...." (page 5). We want to hear from you. If you have questions, others probably want to know too.

Hope to see you Monday, but if not, we wish you all a thoughtful and safe Thanksgiving Holiday with family and friends.

Sandy

Groundwater Meeting

November 13, 2006

7:00 PM

Woodmen Valley Chapel

(NORTHEAST OF MARK SHEFFEL & WOODMEN)

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**WATER
AUTHORITY
MEMBERS**

1. Widefield Water & Sanitation District
2. Security Water & Sanitation District
3. Paint Brush Hills Metropolitan District
4. Donala Water & Sanitation District
5. Woodmen Hills Metropolitan District
6. Triview Metropolitan District/ Town of Palmer Lake
7. City of Fountain
8. Stratmoor Hills Metropolitan District
9. Town of Monument
10. Sunset Metropolitan District/ P2 Water Company
11. Colorado Centre Metropolitan District
12. Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District
13. Cherokee Metropolitan District
14. Cascade Metro Districts 1 & 2
15. Forest Lakes Metro

El Paso County Water Authority

Bea Crandall

For those who are not yet familiar with the Water Authority or have not attended any of their meetings, the following is for your information:

The El Paso County Water Authority is organized under an Establishing Contract as a separate governmental entity, a political subdivision and a public corporation of the State of Colorado. It was approved by the State in November 1996. It is not an office or a department of El Paso County.

The original establishing contract, dated July of 1997, is currently being revised. The purpose of the Authority is to: "effect the development of water resources, systems and facilities in whole or in part for the benefit of the Members and their inhabitants, and others."

They can acquire, construct, manage, maintain or operate water systems, facilities, works or improvements, or to acquire a leasehold or any other interest therein, including dams, reservoirs, other storage facilities, diversion works, treatment facilities and hydroelectric generating and transmission facilities.

Their members are comprised of metropolitan districts, water and sanitation districts, towns and cities within El Paso County. (See side panel) These entities all provide (sell) water and/or sewer services to subdivisions and commercial activities within their dis-

The purpose of the El Paso County Water Authority is to: "effect the development of water resources, systems and facilities in whole or in part for the benefit of the Members and their inhabitants, and others."

tricts. El Paso County has a liaison representative, Commissioner Wayne Williams. Commissioner Sally Clark is the Alternate. Gary Barber is their manager/consultant. **Note that the City of Colorado Springs (Colorado Springs Utilities) is not a member.**

The Authority has completed a Water Report "Master Plan", however it is not part of the El Paso County Master Plan. The report and the Executive Summary is on the County's website. URL They have a manager and a lobbyist who report to the **Water Authority Board** each month. **Meetings are held at 9:00 a.m. the first Wednesday of each month in the BOCC meeting room at 27 E. Vermijo.**

Their members "focus on regional approaches to local water supply issues". They have worked on a Transit Loss Model Update for Fountain and Monument Creek (how much water is lost, and how, between point A and point B), and they have begun a study with the Colorado Geological Survey (not the USGS) to investigate alluvial aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) in the Upper Black Squirrel Creek Designated Basin. They are also involved in a proposed project to recharge the UBSC with treated wastewater.

If you have any questions regarding the authority, Gary Barber plans a Question/Answer session after his presentation.

Your Well, Your Water, Your Responsibility

Julia M Murphy /Hydrogeologist

Protecting private wells is left to the State and home owner. The State only requires checking for coliform and only when a property transfers. So what it comes down to is this:

"If you are on a private well, you alone are responsible for the quality of your water."

Water Quality Standards

Water Quality can vary considerably from location to location; even your neighbor's results may not be the same as your own.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets two standards for drinking water known as Primary and Secondary Drinking Water Standards. Primary standards protect drinking water quality by limiting the levels of specific contaminants that can adversely affect public health and are known or anticipated to occur in water. They take the form of Maximum Contaminant Levels. Secondary standards were established more for cosmetic effects such as skin, clothing or tooth discoloration, or aesthetic effects such as taste, odor or color. These are not known to have significant adverse health effects.

Comparing your water to EPA standards, drinking water analysis will include coliform, nitrate; physical parameters such as pH, alkalinity, turbidity, hardness, calcium, etc; metals, volatile or-

ganic chemicals; and if you live in an area heavy in agriculture, add herbicides and pesticides.

Testing

Beware of companies that offer free onsite analysis or only offers to evaluate what their system fixes. **Do not put a treatment system in until a comprehensive test is completed so you know everything that you**

need to treat, if anything.

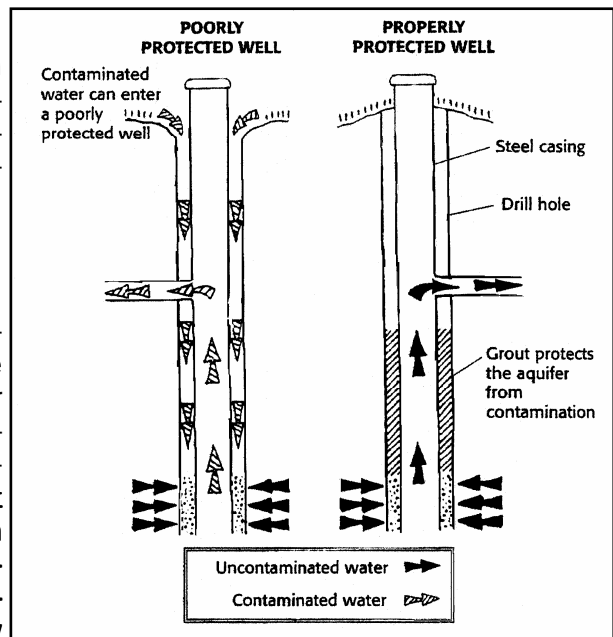
Cost

A comprehensive test through a qualified laboratory will cost about \$260. A small price to pay to ensure your drinking water is safe. It is recommended you do this detailed analysis once on your water supply unless conditions change. EPA does recommend annual testing for coliform (\$15 at El Paso County Health Department) and nitrates (about \$40 from a local lab).

Contamination can reach your water from the surface. One way to help prevent contamination of your well is to make sure it is properly constructed by hiring a certified well driller.

Preventive Tips

For existing wells there are sim-



ple preventive steps to help surface contaminants from entering you well:

- Make sure water drains away from the well casing.
- Store chemicals away from the well head.
- Make sure all animal waste is away from your well.
- Examine your well head- remove the cap (make sure the well is off) and check the well seal and block off openings. Clean out bugs and spider webs (these are not suppose to be there) and check the casing for cracks or corrosion.

If you have additional questions on water quality or how you can protect your well contact me at (719) 495-0661 or email at jmurphy@2gwi.com

Groundwater rights: Can you get them or has someone beat you to it?

Julia M Murphy /Hydrogeologist

Many people with private wells are under the impression they can drill into the next aquifer if the one they are in can no longer produce what they need.

This used to be true but in virtually all new subdivisions, like upcoming Sanctuary in the Pines, and many existing developments, such as Bent Tree, the developers obtained and retained the rights to the deeper aquifers. They can use them or sell them. They understand water means big money.

Sure, there is the required allotment of water retained for the subdivision; in El Paso County, it is suppose to represent a 300 year supply. But what if, just what if, its not. No one guarantees there is water, how much there really is, or whether you can economically access it. What if you have problems after, say 30 years? The first thought is "drill to the next aquifer".

If the rights are held by someone else, the State Division of Water Resources will say "sorry, can't".

If you are fortunate not to have had the groundwater rights severed from your property, you may obtain them by applying to Water Court (out side designated basins) or to the Colorado Groundwater Commission (inside designated basins). You do not have to obtain

water rights to drill or re-drill your well. The state will issue a permit without them. However, if you move it more than 200 feet or drill to the next aquifer, you may be limited on the type of use of your water when you go the next aquifer.

The state in many instances will issue household use only permits. This limits your water consumption to inside uses.

Whether you should obtain water rights depends on your projected future needs and the future needs of whoever buys your home.

Some benefits may include:

- Creating a standing in water court;
- Allowing for a change how you use water on your property. For example, adding a pool, spa, water feature, or horses;
- Subdividing your property (now or in the future) and you want something *other* than "household use only" wells for those new parcels;
- Drill to the next aquifer with flexibility of use.
- Increased property value based on perception.

On the flip side:

- You may be responsible to add water back into the stream system requiring an augmentation or replacement plan.
- You will need to set aside enough water for post-pumping depletions so replacement to steam deple-

tions can continue even after you have stopped pumping.

- You may be required to put in a flow meter and monitor/ report your use.

The application cost is \$136 outside Designated Basins. This cost includes one or more underlying aquifers. In a Designated Basin, such as Upper Black Squirrel Creek or Big Sandy, the cost is \$60 for each aquifer and require separate applications. You will likely have the added expense of a water attorney, hydrogeologist, or water engineer to assist with the applications to make certain you get what you want and understand what will be required.

Whatever you do, you should be informed. To determine if the groundwater rights are available under your property or who has them, call your local Water Court (outside the Designated Basins) or the Colorado Groundwater Commission (inside Designated Basins). You will need to provide them with your well location as shown on your well permit.

Visit www.courts.state.co.us. Additional information on water rights can be obtained from the Colorado Division of Water Resources website at, www.water.state.co.us .

You can also contact me at (719) 495-0661, or by email at jmurphy@2gwi.com and I will direct you to the right resource.

ASK POW.....

Question: "I'm delighted with the work I see you doing to protect the water in Northern El Paso County. I'm curious why you haven't said anything about the five wells the Flying Horse development is using for its golf course."

Answer: There are two Arapahoe wells which service Flying Horse Ranch for the purpose of watering their golf course. These wells (and infrastructure) were paid for and installed by the developer. In addition, they are paying Colorado Springs Utility (CSU) for the water. (Note all the water rights under Flying horse belong to CSU).

Reclaimed water would indeed be the preferred source for irrigating the golf course however, It is important to note that the CSU does not have a reclaimed line anywhere near Flying Horse (or in northern El Paso) at this point in time.

The only alternative would then be to use treated drinking water. Although this water is renewable, the cost of this water is roughly 40 to 50 percent more expensive due to treatment and conveyance; the

Arapahoe ground water does not have to be treated and the wells can be placed near the location of use.

President's Comments: As an all volunteer organization, we have very limited resources, both in the number of volunteers and in the time that can be committed to POW. Unfortunately, that means we sometimes miss issues, like this one, or have other priorities. Thank you for bringing it to our attention.

This also reveals how important it is to have POW members volunteer for committee positions. With more help, even we can't influence the decisions, we can publish positions for all of us, or just be BETTER INFORMED.

If you have questions or comments, please forward them to us at info@protectourwells.org or call me, Sandy Martin, 719-351-1640.

2007 Membership Renewals Are Due

The POW Board of Directors want to thank all of you in advance for renewing your membership for 2007.

Your dues are used primarily to

- cover expenses associated with the newsletter printing and distribution

- printing/copying of other information distributed at our meetings and select public events
- T&E expenses for consultants.

We want to take this opportunity to thank consultant, Julia Murphy, for her work on

the Revised El Paso County Land Development Code, especially the Water Section. In addition to representing POW at the public meetings, she spent endless hours reviewing and recommending revisions.

Please complete the application enclosed with this newsletter so that we can be sure our records are up to date and send with your \$25 check for 2007.

A remittance envelope has been enclosed for your convenience..

Protect Our Wells
PMB22
6835 White Fir Ln #7
Black Forest, CO 80908



Groundwater Meeting
Monday November 13, 2006
(See front page)

Protect Our Wells–Officers & Directors

Officers

President: Sandy Martin 719-351-1640
Vice President: Fred Herman 719-570-0342
Secretary: Mitch Baldwin 719-380-7980
Treasurer: Rich Painter 719-495-7054

Director: Pam Dawson 719-749-2342
Director: Bea Crandall 719-495-4213
Director: Vacant

Newsletter: Sandy Martin 719-351-1640
Webmaster: Fred Herman 719-570-0342

For Information: See our Website <http://protectourwells.org> or email: info@protectourwells.org

About Our Organization

Protect Our Wells (POW), dba Denver Basin Aquifers Private Well Owners Association, is a non-profit, citizen-based organization formed to advocate the interests of private well owners in the Denver Basin. The purpose of Protect Our Wells is to:

- Advocate and promote the unified interests of private well owners at the local and state levels
- Gather information about the status of Denver Basin groundwater supplies and advocate their conservative use
- Educate private well owners about Denver Basin groundwater

Annual membership is \$25. Send check to our treasurer, Rich Painter, at PMB22,6835 White Fir Ln #7,Black Forest, CO 80908